

Transactions

OF THE

BANFFSHIRE FIELD CLUB.



The support of The Strathmartine Trust toward
this publication is gratefully acknowledged.

www.banffshirefieldclub.org.uk

NATURAL HISTORY SPECIMENS.

Dr Mahood exhibited a specimen of the remains of a bat, also an X-ray of it showing its bone structure. He showed also two specimens of the wood-wasp, an insect about which there has been recently some correspondence in South of Scotland newspapers. Both last year and this year specimens were got at Banff, and this year it has been found also at Keith. Dr Mahood remarked that the two specimens he showed were the giant wood-wasp, *Sirex gigas*, and the steel-blue wood-wasp, *Sirex juvencus*. The American popular name of horn-tail was more appropriate, as the long horny projection at the tail end was not a stinging apparatus. It was used for boring holes in trees in which the insect deposits its eggs. The larvæ bore long tunnels in the wood of the tree, and take three years to reach maturity. They cause great destruction in coniferous woods, Larch (*Larix europæa*), Norway spruce (*Picea excelsa*), and especially Scotch fir (*Pinus sylvestris*) suffer from their depredations. The great spotted wood-pecker is the best preventive, as they feed upon the larvæ or grubs. The *Sirex gigas* is from 1 inch to 1½ inches long. The body is banded with yellow and black. The antennæ, eyes, and legs are yellow. In the female the feelers or antennæ are half the body length, and in the male they are nearly as long as the body. It is less bulky and about one inch long. The *Sirex juvencus* is not so brightly coloured as the former. The mature insects are seldom seen as they generally keep near the tops of trees. They are by no means new, although unfamiliar to the general public. A female specimen of each species can be seen at the Banff Museum.

Dr Mahood exhibited also a good example of a cone of the Monkey Puzzle, or Araucaria

imbricata, the Chili Pine, sent in from Alvah. It is not generally known that this tree is so closely related to fir trees, and that its fruit is a true cone. The specimen was 6 inches high and 18 inches in circumference. Dr Mahood mentioned that a similar species of trees flourished in the south of England during the Eocene period, and fossil remains of it are found in the Bournemouth plant-beds. The species was extinct in the British area from the close of that period until reintroduced from Chili.

Dr Mahood showed also fruits of the lime tree, said to appear seldom in these northern parts, and some conversation took place on the periodicity of the fertility of beech-nuts.

The meeting ended with votes of thanks to the authors of the several papers, Mr Calder, Mr Barclay, and Mr Bulloch.